

THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

“Consultation for the Establishment of College Information System Positions”

Background

From Fiscal Year 1999/2000 through 2006/07, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), along with two information technology vendors, successfully designed, built, and implemented the largest information system (CIS) in the history of higher education in the United States. Although the NCCCS had some “bumps” in the road along the way, the CIS now operates successfully at each of the fifty-eight (58) community colleges. This implementation is unique in that it provides a “template” that is used by all 58 colleges, and is maintained and supported by the NCCC System Office.

The CIS includes three separate functional areas, or modules – Financial, Human Resource and Student information – as well as several “system enhancements”, as follows:

- Financial: Consists of budgeting, accounting, purchasing, accounts payable, cash receipting, and financial reporting;
- Human Resources: Consists of personnel, benefits, payroll and reporting; and,
- Student Information: Consists of admissions, financial aid, registration, grading, graduation and reporting.

The “system enhancements” include state and federal legislative compliance, literacy and adult education, Small Business Center reporting, New and Expanding Industry reporting, E-Procurement, and multiple other auxiliary system operations. These enhancements operate as a part of the comprehensive CIS.

In effect, it is the most unique and interconnected information system ever attempted and successfully accomplished in higher education in the country.

Transition Plan

Because the project was so large in scope and complex in nature, encompassing several modules and multiple enhancements, it required implementation in four phases. Colleges were sub-divided into groups (phases), and the modules were implemented over multiple fiscal years. This complex activity required numerous vendor-provided “subject matter experts”, the transfer of knowledge to NCCCS staff, and the transition from vendor implementation to owner (NCCCS) operations and maintenance.

In order to accomplish this, a “transition plan” was developed by both the vendors and System Office staff, in cooperation with the State Office of Information Technology. The transition plan included a migration of duties, responsibilities and information from vendor to owner, including the delivery of documentation, configurations, design assumptions, manuals and

business logic. It also included a phased reduction of vendor provided subject matter experts, and the necessity to employ additional System Office technology staff.

In order to implement the transition plan, prior approval was sought of both the North Carolina General Assembly and the State Chief Information Officer (CIO). The 2006 Session of the General Assembly¹ authorized the establishment of twenty (20) additional technology positions in the System Office “to transfer the maintenance and administration of the College Information System Project from the vendor to the System Office.” On September 11, 2006 State CIO George Bakolia strongly endorsed the transition staffing plan. Following consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Government Operations, the Office of State Budget & Management approved the new positions on September 19, 2006.

In order to continue with the second portion of the transition plan, the 2007 Session of the General Assembly² authorized the “use of funds appropriated in this act for the College Information System Project to create a maximum of 10 positions or incur expenditures necessary to transfer the maintenance and administration of the College Information System Project from the vendor to the System Office.” The General Assembly required, however, that “personnel positions created pursuant to this subsection shall be located in community colleges across the State.” This legislation further required consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations.

Therefore, the request now being brought forward is to obtain approval of the establishment of ten (10) additional technology positions as subject matter and training experts, consistent with the CIS functional areas, to be located across the NCCCS.

More specific information about the positions is included in the attachment.

Kennon D. Briggs
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¹ Section 8.3 of Session Laws 2006-66

² Section 8.1 of Session Laws 2007-323